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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/517,971	03/24/2005	Kazuhito Kawakami	62527 (49227)	3609
21874	7590	06/22/2006	EXAMINER	
EDWARDS & ANGELL, LLP			BOYKIN, TERRESSA M	
P.O. BOX 55874			ART UNIT	
BOSTON, MA 02205			PAPER NUMBER	
			1711	

DATE MAILED: 06/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/517,971

Applicant(s)

KAWAKAMI ET AL.

Examiner

Terressa M. Boykin

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 April 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 15-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 15-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

Response to Amendment

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 15-25 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicants' claims 15, 21 and 25 are so broadly set forth that the claim continues to be interpreted by the Examiner as anticipated by the references while remaining within the scope of the specification. Without such clarity of structure, the art of record remains within the scope of the present claims and the applicants arguments although understood and appreciated are moot on those basis.

It would be beneficial and helpful for the applicants in order to expedite the prosecution of the case to be in position of allowability by using language from the specification or drawn directly from the examples of the specification that would clearly and further specify the claimed language without, of course, unfairly limiting applicants intended invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 15-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 5399618 see abstract, cols. 1-6, claims.

This reference relates to processes for preparing aqueous polymer emulsions useful as thickening agents in aqueous compositions in which plating and/or grit formation is reduced in said processes. This invention also relates to methods for reducing plating and/or grit formation in processes for preparing aqueous polymer emulsions useful as thickening agents in aqueous compositions.

This reference further relates to polymers which are soluble in, or swelled by, an aqueous alkaline medium to provide thickeners for use in aqueous coating compositions, especially latex paints.

This reference provides for economical high solids processes, and greatly enhances the mechanical, heat-age and shelf stability of latexes without adversely affecting the film properties of paints that contain the thickeners. It is believed that the acrylates and/or methacrylates of strong acids or salts of strong acids provide ionized or ionizable groups on the polymer particle surface making the polymer particle more resistant to flocculation or agglomeration *caused by shear forces* and added ionic agents, e.g., initiators and surfactants, and thereby reducing plating and/or grit formation. The aqueous polymer emulsions of this invention have sufficient electrostatic repulsive forces between the polymer particles to provide improved mechanical stability to the emulsion and reduced reactor fouling, i.e., reduced polymer scrap.

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The thickeners of this invention possess structural attributes of two
E entirely different types of thickeners (those which thicken by alkali solubilization of a high molecular weight entity, and those which thicken due to association), and this may account for the superior thickener properties which are obtained herein.

To obtain an estimate of thickening efficiency, the product can be diluted with water to about 1% solids content and then neutralized with alkali. The usual alkali is ammonium hydroxide, but sodium and potassium hydroxide, and even amines, like triethylamine, may be used for neutralization. The neutralized product dissolves in the water to provide an increase in the viscosity. In the normal mode of addition, the unneutralized thickener is added to a paint and then neutralized. This facilitates handling the thickener because it has a lower viscosity before neutralization. This procedure also makes more water available for the paint formulation.

The polymer may be utilized in a variety of ways to provide the thickener or thickened compositions of this invention. For example, the polymer, while in aqueous dispersion or dry form, may be blended into an aqueous system to be thickened followed by addition of a neutralizing agent. Alternatively, the polymer may first be neutralized in aqueous dispersion form and then blended with the aqueous system. Preferably, if co-thickening by a surfactant is desired, the components are separately blended (as dry components or as dispersions or slurries) into an aqueous dispersion to be thickened,

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followed by the neutralization step. Although aqueous concentrates of the polymer in acid form and the surfactant may be formed and added to an aqueous dispersion to be thickened as needed, followed by neutralization, such concentrates tend to be too viscous for easy handling. It is nevertheless possible to prepare either a dry blend or an aqueous, high solids composition which is sufficiently low in viscosity as to be pumpable or pourable, and then to further thicken the admixture by addition of an alkaline material.

The polymer thickener may be provided in a dry state in number of ways. For example, the unneutralized polymer may be spray or drum dried and, if desired, blended with a surfactant co-thickener. However, it is also possible to spray dry or otherwise dehydrate the neutralized polymer thickener, and then reconstitute the aqueous thickener dispersion at a future time and place by agitation in a aqueous medium, provided the pH of the dispersion is maintained at pH 7 or higher.

The more usual method of application of the dispersion of this reference for aqueous thickening is to add the aqueous dispersion of the polymer to the medium to be thickened and, after mixing, to introduce an alkaline material to neutralize the acid. The major portion of the thickening effect is obtained in a few minutes upon neutralization. In the presence of high concentrations of electrolytes, the viscosity development may take much longer.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Correspondence

Please note that the cited U.S. patents and patent application publications are available for download via the Office's PAIR. As an alternate source, all U.S. patents and patent application publications are available on the USPTO web site (www.uspto.gov), from the Office of Public Records and from commercial sources. Applicants may be referred to the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at <http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/index.html> or 1-866-217-9197.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Examiner Terressa Boykin whose telephone number is 571 272-1069. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 3:00pm.

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The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306. The general information number for listings of personnel is (571-272-1700).

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

tmb



Examiner Terressa Boykin

TERRESSA M. BOYKIN
PRIMARY EXAMINER